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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

1. In the above referenced Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1 and 23 under 35 USC § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Higgins (U.S. Patent No. 6,587,480) in view of Corley (U.S. Patent No 6,304,576); and claims 4 and 26 under 35 USC § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Higgins (U.S. Patent No. 6,587,480) in view of Corley (U.S. Patent No 6,304,576) and further in view of Dirkman (U.S. Patent No. 6,922,399). Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication of allowability of claims 2, 3, 5, 24, 25, 27, and for the allowance of claims 7, 10-12, 15-22, 29, 32-34, 37-41 and 44.

Claims 1, 3-5, 7, 10-12, 15-26, 29, 32-34, and 37-41 and 44 are currently pending in this application. Claims 1 and 23 have been amended. Claims 2 and 5 have been cancelled. The rejections above have been traversed and, as such, the applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the allowability of claims 1, 3-5, and 23-26.

2. As discussed above, claim 1 was rejected based on the combination of Higgins and Corley. Claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter of allowable claim 2. For these reasons, Applicant believes that Claim 1 and claims 3-5 that depend therefrom are patentably distinct from the prior art.

3. Claim 23 was also rejected based on the combination of Higgins and Corley. Claim 23 has been amended to include the subject matter of allowable claim 27. For these reasons, Applicant believes that Claim 23 and

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claims 24-26 that depend therefrom are patentably distinct from the prior art.

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For the foregoing reasons, the applicant believes that claims 1, 3-5 and 23-26 are in condition for allowance and respectfully request that they be passed to allowance.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone or facsimile if the Examiner believes that such a communication would advance the prosecution of the present invention.

No additional fee is due. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any fees that are required or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-2126 (VIXS 007).

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

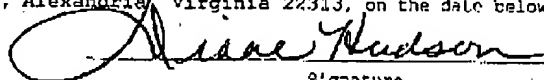
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CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being transmitted by facsimile to fax number (512) 241-8444 deposited with the U.S. Postal Service with sufficient postage as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Alexandria, Virginia 22313, on the date below:

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